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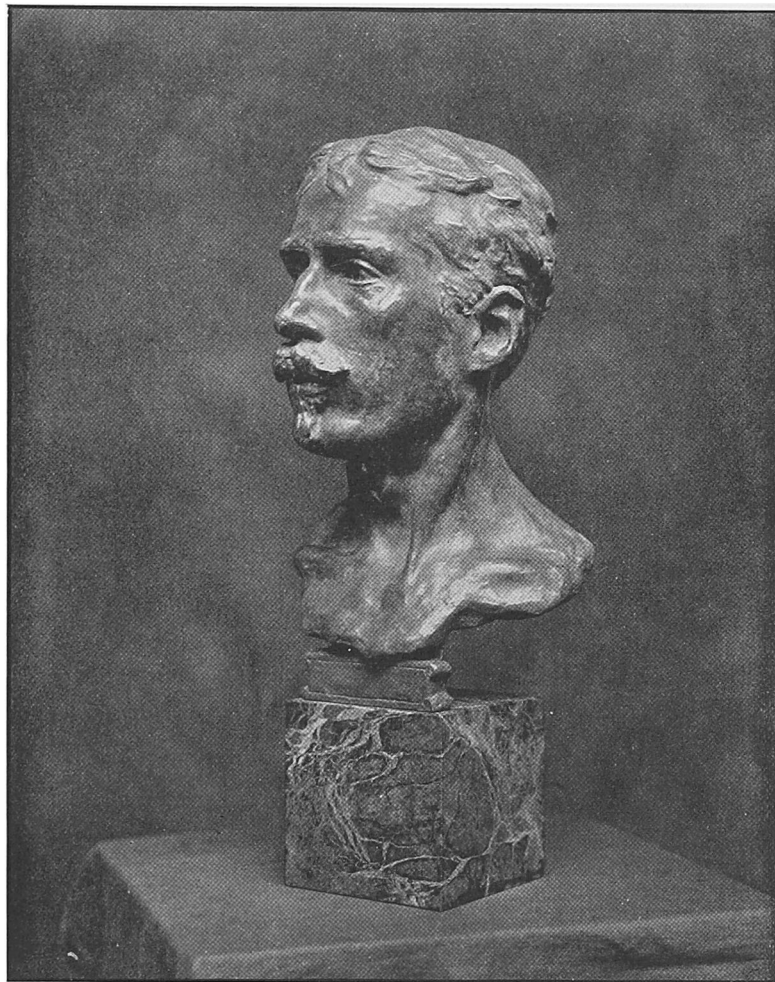
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THE LATE CARROLL BECKWITH

BY GEORGE T. BREWSTER

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF ARCHITECTURE IN CALIFORNIA

BY THE LATE CARROLL BECKWITH

### PART II.—ECHOES OF THE SAN DIEGO EXPOSITION

**I**N the old *adobe* structures of one story with their heavy tiled roofs, the overhang was suitable and picturesque. Each time a view is obtained from the car window of a fragment of the old Spanish-Moorish architectural construction, the eye of the tourist is rejoiced, as at Ventura in the Mission chapel and the glimpse of the ruins of San Juan Capistrano which was overthrown by an earthquake in 1812. Here, above the pitiful modern structures, the frame housings of man and his un-beautiful land implements, rises the impressive form of a lofty arch and crumbled wall dominating with dignity the whole aspect of the landscape.

This is the lesson which the builders of the San Diego Exposition have endeavored to impress on the people of California. They have shown that there is something vastly more beautiful and appropriate to the character of the country than the much-favored "bungalow" or the transplantation of the Hudson River villa with its cupola. Happily the gradual disappearance of timber and the more general use of concrete will aid in the evolution of

architectural beauty in California. It is too much, of course, to expect that the use of ornament can be comparable to the examples imported from Mexico in the Exposition; and yet—why not? We have the architects and the sculptors, and we have the painters who can ornament our public buildings; that is demonstrated in many public structures today throughout the country. It only depends on Commissions composed of educated and cultured men, or men associated with women, as is the case in this advanced state.

I would not suggest servile imitation and reproduction of ornament that perhaps might be concluded from the foregoing, but the sympathetic adaptation of lines and masses which have in the past appeared suitable in similar surroundings. All good art is derived from a predecessor and the genius of the architect which pretends to originality and is not guided by type, precedent or natural evolution should be looked upon askance.

Perhaps the only question which comes to my mind as regards the beautiful cluster of buildings



FIG. 2—THE JUNIPERO SERRA MONUMENT

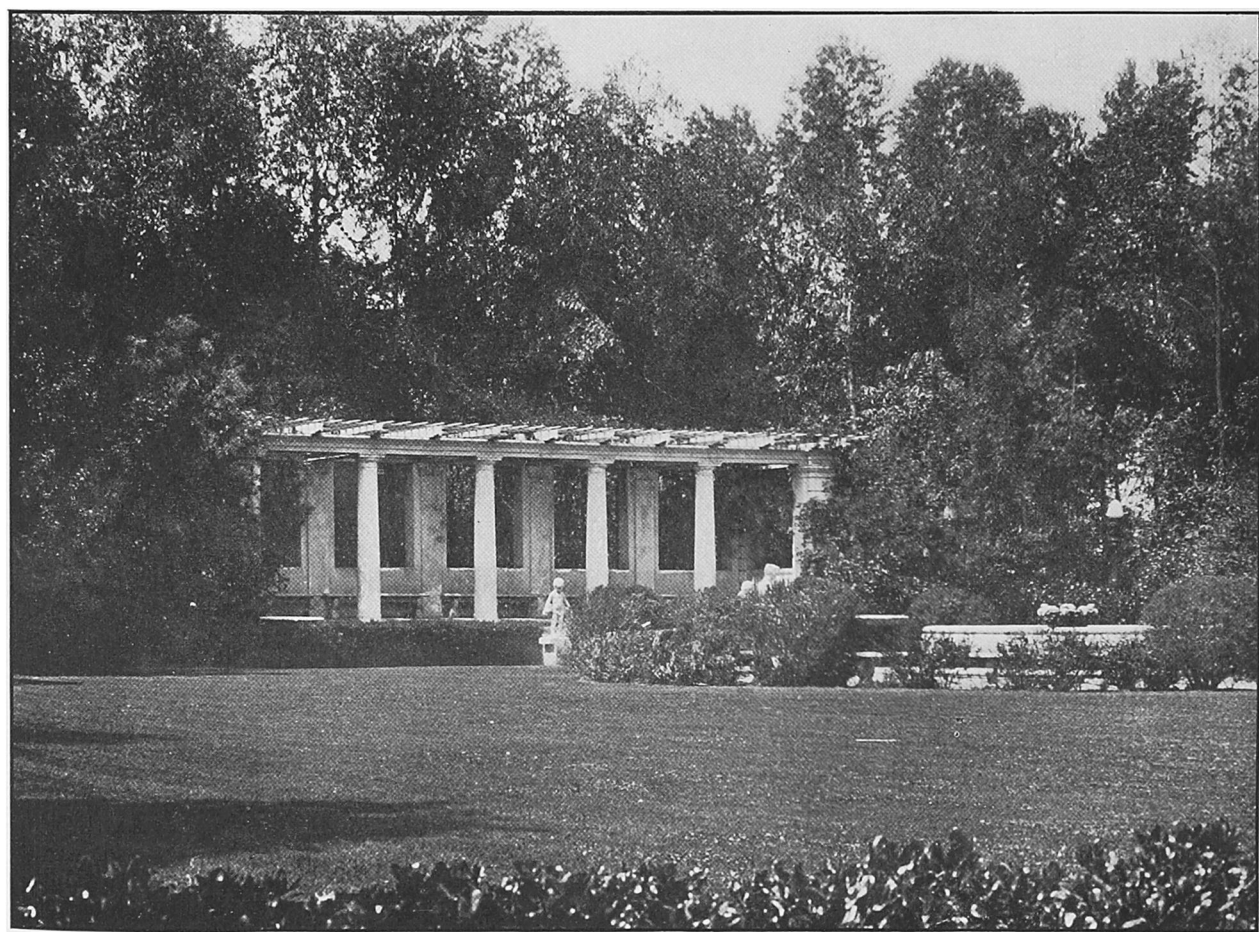


FIG. 3—PARTERRE, NEAR THE HORTICULTURAL BUILDING



FIG. 4—PERSPECTIVE OF ONE OF THE COLONNADES

which compose the San Diego Exposition is in regard to color. A Fair is a *fête*, an event that is joyous, buoyant. Why then this somber gray color of concrete which mitigates the extreme elegance of line that prevails? Tintings of the background walls which form the appropriate setting for the elaborate ornaments surrounding windows, doors and cornices, would have added immeasurably to the beauty of effect in the dazzling sunlight.

Wherever draperies have been used, as on balconies (see the Foreign and Domestic Arts Building) or in canopies, they are intensely effective. Gilding and colored tiles could also be used effectively, if controlled and subordinated. This is illustrated at the top of the tower and occasionally in a dome. But I must apologize even for presenting this suggestion upon an *en semble* where form and drawing have such masterly handling, especially at a moment when these latter are cast into disrepute by the would-be Art of our Epoch.

Mexico has been drawn on largely in these rich clusters of ornament surrounding doors and windows, set in broad spaces of blank wall which show them with emphasis. I am remotely reminded of the Palace of the Doges in Venice, where the columns and arches of the first story are surmounted by the wall of gray and pink stone, where the emplacement of the windows with their clustered ornament is so effective.

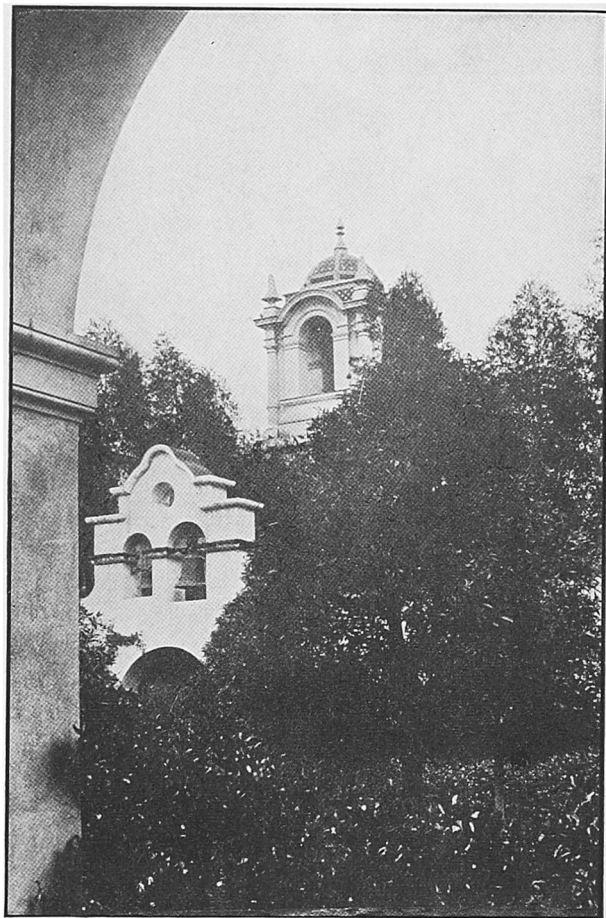


FIG. 5—INDIAN ARTS BUILDING—GATE OF MONTEZUMA GARDEN

This architectural evolution should be pursued at the same time as the construction of good roads, if we would tempt the traveler to remain and spend his money in his own marvelous land. Committee-men who have the laying out and embellishment of our Western cities under their control would do well to bear this in mind.

The main portal of the building which was devoted to the French pavilion, is a striking and tasteful example of concentrated ornament, where the taste and artistry shown in the sculptured statues and busts left nothing to be desired. By continuing this natural development of architecture on the Pacific Coast an individual and local character will be perpetuated and developed, adding beauty and variety to our country, enhancing the delights of travel and giving a real motive for touring in our own land beyond that, now in vogue, of covering distances alone.

I am much indebted to the kind courtesy of Mr. A. R. Edmondson, a professional and artistic photographer of Santa Barbara, who very kindly came to San Diego while I was there and took the accompanying photographs.

In photograph No. 3 of this second article I desire to call the attention of the reader—who I hope also is interested in this development, which it is my belief has considerable association with the artistic and intellectual future of our country—to the formal and somewhat Italian arrangement of the pergola combined with the parterre and the



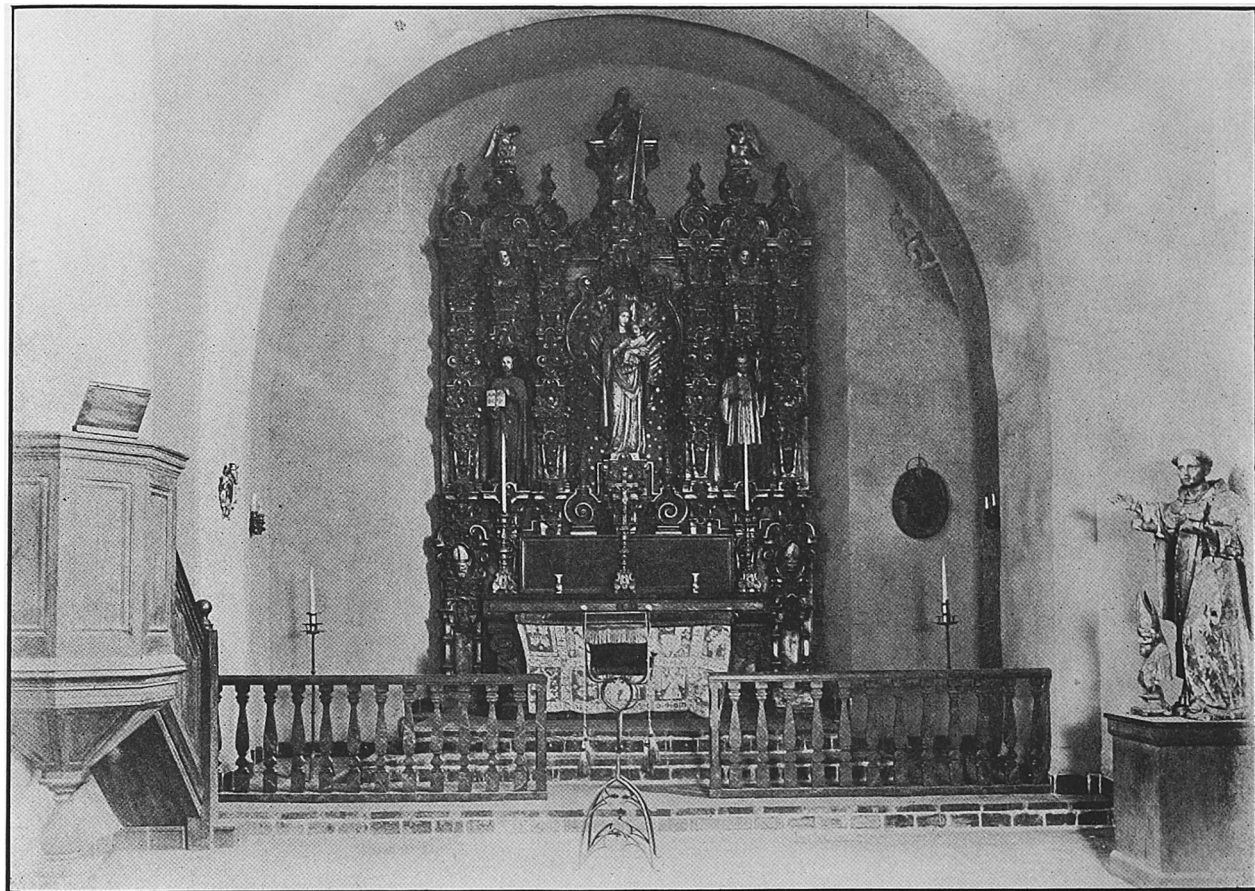


FIG. 6—ALTAR IN CHAPEL OF ST. FRANCIS

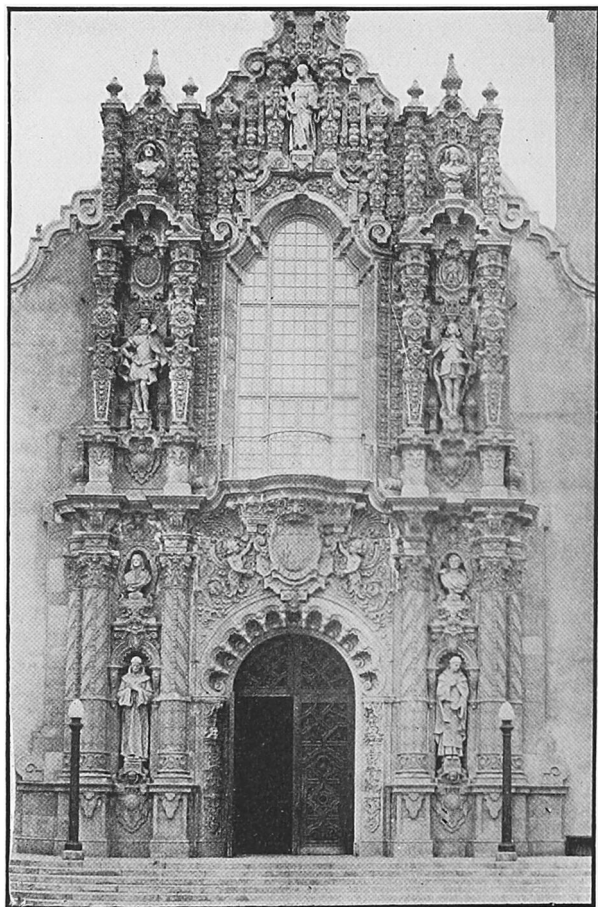


FIG. 7—PORTAL OF THE FRENCH PAVILION IN SPANISH STYLE

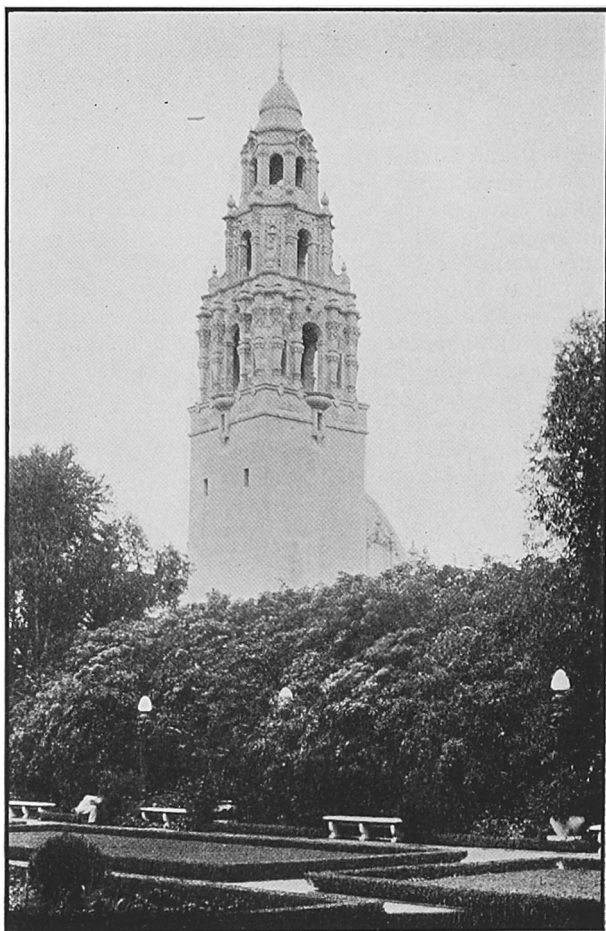


FIG. 8—THE TOWER, FROM THE MONTEZUMA GARDEN



FIG. 9—COMMERCE AND INDUSTRIAL BUILDING

statuary and fountain. This *ensemble* is distinctly late Italian and might almost be placed in a seventeenth century French garden. For a purist in landscape gardening, is this a happy introduction? I am prepared to admit that any theory can be carried to the extreme, but, I ask my reader, is this Renaissance view in strict harmony with the admittedly characteristic illustrations shown in Nos. 4, 5, or 7?

Plant and tree growth have been utilized in this exposition to a degree probably exceeding that of any of its predecessors. Owing to the extreme responsiveness of the soil and the high degree of intelligence and education which directed it, a perfection has been attained which reminds one of the gardens of Versailles. Given bodies of water so placed that the spectator enjoys the mirrored reflections of the architectural beauties, united with trim hedges appropriate in height, based by lawns and surmounted by foliage in well-selected trees, and you have an *ensemble* that belongs to the days of royal palaces. The absence of statuary and other sculpture is to be noted, but *que voulez-vous?* . . .

San Francisco has taken a leading step in this regard by the creation of a Civic Center in its midst devoted to the concentration of its public and municipal structures, formally planned and

thoughtfully disposed so as to redound to the city's intelligence and culture. In the two buildings of the group already finished the influence of the *École des Beaux Arts* of our day is observable, with its merging of classicism and modern utility. The Public Library has great dignity and I cannot too greatly admire the dome of the City Hall, with its reminiscence of Mansard and the *Hôtel des Invalides*.

In no sense is it necessary to be a servile imitator of an example. Indeed I do not believe that a piece of architecture stamped with the genius of its creator *can* be absolutely reproduced; but the respectful adaptation of forms of recognized beauty and dignity in both proportion and grace of line I deem wise and to be encouraged. Efforts at originality, which generally result in abortions, belong usually to the immature in art, to the adolescent. The older an artist grows, the deeper is his respect for the great works which have stood the criticism of ages, and where the consensus of opinion has pronounced them masterpieces. Departures may be made—but with extreme discretion; not forgetting that the more conspicuously placed these experimental efforts at originality or modernity are, the more blatant will be their absurdities as time goes on.

Carroll Beckwith